



June 12, 2003

If You're Concerned About the Poor, Should You Listen to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities?

Information from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) is being used to attack the refundable child tax credit provisions of the economic growth package and even to attack the proposed solutions. In fact, just yesterday the CBPP alleged that the House proposal on the child tax credit "is more likely over the long run to harm than to help children, especially low-income children." (See: <http://www.cbpp.org/6-11-03tax.htm>) But can the CBPP be trusted as a source of accurate, non-partisan research when it comes to issues affecting the poor?

What the CBPP Said About Welfare Reform in 1996...

Welfare reform will "make many children who are already poor poorer still.... No piece of legislation in U.S. history has increased the severity of poverty so sharply [as the welfare reform will]."

"The overriding effect of the legislation is likely to be a large increase in poverty, especially among children and legal immigrants."

"In July 1996, the Urban Institute released a study, based on conservative assumptions, showing that the welfare bill the House of Representatives approved that month would push 1.1 million children — and 2.6 million people overall — into poverty...The assumptions the Urban Institute employed are conservative."

"In addition to increasing the number of children who are poor, the bill will make many children who already are poor still poorer."

"This weakening of the safety net is likely to lead to significant increases in poverty."

The Reality...

There are 3.5 million fewer people living in poverty today than there were in 1995 and 2.9 million fewer children live in poverty today than in 1995.

Since welfare reform, the poverty rate among black children has dropped by one-fourth, falling from 41.5 percent in 1995 to 30.0 percent in 2001.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are 420,000 fewer hungry children today than at the time welfare reform was enacted.

The poverty rate has fallen from 13.8 percent in 1995 to 11.7 percent in 2001. The child poverty rate has fallen from 20.8 percent in 1995 to 16.3 percent in 2001.

In 1995, there were 5.9 million children living in deep poverty; by 2001, the number had fallen to 5.1 million.

Is the CBPP non-partisan? Here's What Others Have Said...

The Los Angeles Times referred to the CBPP as “liberal-leaning” on May 30 and as one of several “liberal interest groups” critical of the tax bill’s treatment of low-income children on June 3.

The New York Times has referred to the CBPP as “a liberal group” and “a liberal research group” (May 29 and June 1).

ABC News refers to the CBPP as “a liberal policy group,” while CBS News calls the Center “a very liberal think tank”
